



## **The Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management Celebrates its 25th Anniversary and the Grand Opening of Its New Facilities**

**By**

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On 27 August 2002, the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management (DISAM) celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary with a formal ribbon cutting ceremony of its new facilities. Presiding over the ceremony was Lieutenant General Tome Walters, USAF, Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency. Guests included representatives from other military departments, including Gibson LeBouef, Deputy Director, Navy International Programs Office and John Baer, Director, Army Security Assistance Training Field Activity. The Department of Defense was also represented with Dr. Jerome Smith, Chancellor for Education and Professional Development as well as Commander Rick Bagley, USN, Deputy Director, Defense Institute of International Legal Studies. Colonel Michael Belzil, USAF 88th Air Base Wing Commander, was also among the honored guests in attendance. DISAM was also honored to be able to host a wide representation



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from the various base support service organizations upon which it heavily relies, as well as a large number of Foreign Liaison Officers from the Air Force Security Assistance Center. The building renovation architect, Tom Ovington from Barge Waggoner Sumner and Cannon, Inc. was also in attendance.



**New student lounge.**

DISAM has its roots in a number of studies completed in the mid-1970s. As a result of the studies, it was determined that there was a need for the U.S. government to improve its process for transferring defense articles and services to other countries, a program also known as security assistance. It was also determined that an institute should be established that would be dedicated to bringing about such improvements. In 1976, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base was selected as the site for the institute and the Department of the Air Force was designated as the executive agency. In accordance with a Department of Defense Directive, DISAM was founded to serve as the centralized Department of Defense institute for the consolidated professional education of personnel involved in security assistance management, armaments cooperation, and associated programs.

A pilot course was conducted in February 1977, and in October 1978, the Conus and Overseas Courses were formally scheduled, serving as a foundation for all current DISAM courses. On 1 October, 1998, DISAM was officially transferred to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and became a directorate of DSCA. In September 2001, DISAM was fully accredited by the Council on Occupational Education.

DISAM provides both in-resident and non-resident courses. In-resident courses have graduated over 36,000 students in the last twenty-five years. An additional 10,000 students have graduated from mobile training teams, on-site courses, and distance learning courses. Of the nearly 50,000 students who have graduated from DISAM courses, nearly 4,000 have been international students from 159 countries. This is a significant accomplishment and demonstrates the impact DISAM has worldwide on the U.S. government's international programs.

DISAM began the training process in Building 288 in 1977 in Area A at Wright-Patterson AFB. In October 1978 the institute moved to Building 125. The 37,000 square feet allocated to the institute in the new building allowed DISAM to better provide a facility that met the educational requirements of personnel working in the security assistance community. The new home, Building 52, with about 40,000 square feet, has a more advanced computer/LAN internet capability, advanced library services, and improved video teleconferencing connectivity that will serve the security assistance community for many years to come.



**New computer lab.**

Currently, eighteen separate courses are taught by the DISAM faculty, some of which focus on the needs of specific organizations and missions. Others have more fixed curricula, but are continuously updated and tailored to meet customer's needs.



**New library.**

DISAM often employs the use of guest speakers as adjunct faculty members or part-time instructors in its courses. Many guest speakers are government employees with specific areas of expertise, but there are also a full range of non-governmental specialists and consultants. In all cases, these are subject matter experts who provide the students the most up-to-date information.

With the addition of the new facility and twenty-five years of institutional experience and over 350 years of practical and teaching experience among the faculty, DISAM looks forward to providing ever improving education and services for the entire security assistance community. The current facility is nominated for the 2003 United States Air Force Design Award, and to paraphrase Lieutenant General Walters, will serve DISAM well for the next twenty-five years.

### **About the Author**

Lieutenant Dana S. Clay is a Navy Surface Warfare Officer and has been assigned to the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management since 2000. In addition to being an Assistant Professor of Security Assistance Management, she is also the Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection functional coordinator. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in marine engineering from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and is working on a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix.